

**Testimony of Rhonda Boisvert, President
CT Association of Residential Care Homes**

**H.B. No. 6824 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM
ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2017, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR AND
OTHER PROVISIONS RELATED TO REVENUE.**

Department of Social Services- February 27, 2015

Senator Bye, Representative Walker, Senator Flexer, Representative Abercrombie and Members of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Human Services, my name is Rhonda Boisvert and I am the President of the Connecticut Association of Residential Care Homes. I am also the co-owner of two residential care homes in Watertown and Haddam.

I am here today to testify in opposition to the budget as it relates to residential care homes. The budget would prohibit residential care homes from receiving fair rent and cap residential care home rates.

The Ct Association of Residential Care Homes (CARCH) is the largest organization for residential care homes in the state representing the majority of the 101 residential care homes in the state.

As owner of two Residential Care Homes I have grave concerns about how we and others in the industry can remain open. The costs of operating are not just straining the homes but have personally impacted me due to the money my husband and I have had to put into our homes.

Here are some of the difficulties our homes have had to face:

- In the past four years, we have had to replace a very tired fire escape. The cost was \$19,000. We used personal funds and are in the process of paying ourselves back when we can.
- Two weeks ago, we put in \$5,000 of personal funds to pay property taxes. We also discontinued paying into our pension plan.
- My employees have not had a raise in the last five years.
- As owners we don't cash our pay checks each week because we can't. We get paid at the end of the month if cash flow allows it.
- Our snow plowing bills are out of sight and we do not have discretionary funds to afford the increased costs.
- One of our homes runs on total electric which as we all know had a significant increase.
- We have incurred some water leakage into some of the rooms from the heavy snow.

Recently, I received a call from my accountant. He said Rhonda, I need to be up front with you. These homes have to be sold. From a business point of view it is a difficult job to work on the finances of your homes and the eight others that I am working for.

As President of CARCH, I speak to many owners. We all are suffering financially. These homes are taking care of a very vulnerable population. Our residents are mostly people with serious behavioral health issues who without our homes would oftentimes be in a more institutionalized setting. Without our homes the state will need to come up with alternate housing as I fear we will be forced to shut our doors.

I urge the committee to consider the impact of the budget on residential care homes which care for some of the most vulnerable citizens in the state. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Rhonda Boisvert, President
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